



Report by the Flourishing DIG Chair

West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Management Group - 12th August 2021

Subject: Flourishing DIG Update - Sustainability

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update members on the development and delivery of activity being undertaken under the auspices of the Flourishing Delivery and Improvement Group (DIG).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Management Group is asked to note the work undertaken.

3. Background

- 3.1** The Flourishing DIG action plan supports the local outcomes ensuring:
- Our economy is flourishing diverse and dynamic, creating opportunities for everyone
 - Our local communities are sustainable and attractive
 - Increased and better quality learning & employment opportunities
 - Enhanced quality and availability of affordable housing options
- 3.2** This report provides members with an update on the key sustainability activity undertaken during the operational year to date.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The Covid19 Stay at Home Order/ Lockdown on 23 March 2020 continues well into the summer of 2021 and has required a comprehensive and sustained response from the Flourishing DIG partner organisations. The focus for the Flourishing DIG over the last six months is to develop a response to the economic impacts of the COVID pandemic. The DIG action plan is currently being updated with that objective in mind.
- 4.2** The Flourishing DIG is focused on the direct and wider economic impact of the Pandemic. Input is provided by Scottish Enterprise and the City Region intelligence unit on the potential impact on employment and the wider economy.

Along with some negative or unknown Brexit consequences the pandemic presented some real challenges in our communities, and for CPWD in developing a suitable response. Partners continue to monitor the situation and as restrictions are relaxed and our communities return to some form of normality the true extent on this Pandemic will become more evident.

5. Employability

- 5.1** Working4u and partners have been developing a new approach to the delivery of local employability service called No One Left Behind. This has seen the development of the strategic employability partnership that includes representation from key agencies such as SDS and DWP, who are now working alongside Working 4U and local employability service providers to co-ordinate efforts for the benefit of local residents.
- 5.2** The local employability partnership has produced a plan to develop and manage employability services. A number of work streams have been established and these will focus on:
- A service provider group, drawing representation from the third and private sector, to support the design and delivery of creative approaches to service delivery
 - A community of practice with frontline staff from employability service providers contributing to the development of approaches that ease access to services
 - A service user group to gather information from a service user perspective
 - A data use group to develop a clear understanding of the local labour market to inform decisions about service provision.
- 5.3** The strategic employability group is focused on the most effective use of grant funding for employability and has established a procurement framework that will allow us to draw on a broader range of specialist service provision. This will maximise the use of funds in programmes such as: No One Left Behind Funds; the Parental Employability Support Fund: Young Persons guarantee, where focus will be placed on incentives for employers to employ young people.
- 5.4** In addition the new Kickstart programme will allow us to connect young people with employers providing resources to meet salary and training costs. All of these funds will provide additional resources to meet training costs and in some cases meet salary costs for people to (re) enter the labour market and we have established a monitoring framework to capture progress in the design and delivery of the new activity.

6. Business Support

- 6.1** The Business Support team has continued to administer support grants. Since the Pandemic restrictions, the service has distributed over £30m of grant funding to our local business community. The most recent statistics for COVID business support schemes are as follows:
- The Strategic Framework Business Fund opened on Friday 13 November 2020 to provide financial support to businesses directly affected by the

COVID-19 restrictions and regulations during the lockdown period. This fund closed for applications on Monday 22 March 2021. 626 applications were approved with financial support totalling £5,108,175. In addition to this, the team have also provided retail, hospitality and leisure top-up grants to 457 eligible premises, which totals £3,214,000 and supported 541 eligible businesses with transition/re-start grants which total £4,834,000;

- Financial support has also been provided to Travel Agents, Brewers and Indoor Football Centre premises through the Contingency Fund Plus Grant which totals £120,000. Exclusive Use Venues, large self-catering premises and small accommodation providers paying Council Tax have also been provided with grant support which totals £58,000;
- The Taxi Driver & Private Hire fund went live on Thursday 21 January 2021 and closed on Thursday 25 March 2021. The Business Support team worked in partnership with Licensing to check the eligibility of applicants. This fund has provided 351 taxi drivers with financial support which totalled £526,500;
- The Discretionary Business Fund provided grant support to local businesses that were experiencing immediate financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions and regulations that had not been able to access the Strategic Framework Business Fund. Prior to the fund closing on 30 April 2021, the fund assisted 444 individuals/businesses with financial support which totalled £1,457,000. These figures includes an additional top-up grant of £1,500 which was provided to eligible approved taxi drivers in addition to the financial support already provided through the Taxi Driver & Private Hire Fund.
- A new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Driver and Operator Support Fund scheme is currently being to be delivered by the Council on behalf of the Scottish Government. As of 16 July 2021, 98 payments have been made totalling £98,000.

7. Regeneration

7.1 Regeneration works across our towns continue with support from partners, in particular with the Chamber of Commerce as we promote the 'shop local' campaign. Together with place based regeneration works this will improve our local towns while providing support to our local businesses as they recover from the Pandemic.

7.2 In terms of sustainability the single biggest regeneration project in West Dunbartonshire is the Queens Quay district heating network as it commenced operations in November 2020 creating heat from water drawn from the river Clyde. The facility is running well and has four connected facilities. Priority going forward is to make connections with West College Scotland and the Golden Jubilee Hospital within the next 12-18 months. The social housing development on Queens Quay is being connected over this Summer of 2021 and we anticipated connection to the Clydebank Health centre in Spring 2023.

This unique facility has drawn a significant amount of interest and we hope that it will play some role in the Global COP26 event in November 2021.

7.3 Council has applied for £20m levelling up funding from UK government towards the regeneration of Dumbarton Town centre and anticipate the result of this bid by October 2021. The City Deal Exxon project is progressing as planned as are the plans to convert the brownfield Carless site into a Scottish Marine Technology Park in co-operation with the Malin Group.

8. People Implications

8.1 There are no personnel issues.

9. Financial and Procurement Implications

9.1 There are no specific financial implications arising at present. The introduction of Pandemic specific funding has assisted delivery during the 2020-21 financial year, however as the interruption and subsequent restrictions continue into the 2021/22 financial year, financial implications may come into focus.

10. Risk Analysis

10.1 There are no specific unassessed risks relating to this report

11. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

11.1 Equalities Impact Assessments are carried out in all key action areas as required.

12. Consultation

12.1 Ongoing consultation activity with both providers and service recipients is undertaken allowing for flexibility of approach as needs throughout the pandemic progress change.

13. Strategic Assessment

13.1 The contents of this report could impact on all community planning strategic priority areas.

13.2 The activity being developed and supported by the Flourishing DIG will continue to contribute and reinforce our efforts to develop a strong economy that provides access to opportunity for all in West Dunbartonshire.

Name Peter Barry, Chief Officer Housing & Employability
Date: 27 July 2021

Person to Contact: Michael McGuinness

Michael.mcguinness@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
0777 442 8294

Background Papers: Flourishing DIG Action Plan 2020-22

Wards Affected: All